



ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact school administration on 9708 1319

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to

- ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction
- ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
- explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Example School has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Gleneagles SC.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Gleneagles SC, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

DEFINITION

Parent – includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child, including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

POLICY

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

Daily attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Gleneagles SC during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student

- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Example School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Gleneagles SC for particular activities.

Both schools and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.

Gleneagles SC believes all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction and is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support full school attendance.

Our school will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.

Gleneagles SC parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the school and providing valid explanations for any absence.

Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Gleneagles SC about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.

Parents will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Gleneagles SC's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by:

Supporting and promoting attendance

Gleneagles Secondary College's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by devolving a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal

The following whole of school strategies are used to promote attendance and inclusion:

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning

- analysing and being responsive to a school attendance data
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- deliver a broad curriculum including VCE and VET/VCAL through the Alliance to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- teachers use an instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high impact teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour, student achievement and attendance is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the SALT (Student Activities and Leadership Team), Student Congress and other forums including Home Groups / Mentor meetings and year level meetings. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Team leaders, Sub-school Leaders, Student Engagement Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs and peer support programs (lunch time activities, clubs)
- all students are encouraged to self-refer to the team leaders to gain access to the Doctors in School's Program, school Social Work, Speech Pathologist, School Nurse and DET Student Support Services. Team leaders work with the student to build a team of co-ordinated supports around them that meet their needs
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which is informed by programs such as:
 - Respectful Relationships
 - Against Bullying
 - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. social skills, body image, mental health, managing emotions programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs and lunchtime activities)

Targeted

The following targeted strategies and supports are used to address attendance concerns for certain groups:

- each student has a home group teacher/mentor who is their first point of contact for health, wellbeing and additional needs support

- teachers write Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) for identified students as needed to assist them to access the curriculum
- team leaders are assigned to each year level to monitor the attendance, health and wellbeing of students in their year and act as a point of contact for students who may need additional support. They conduct all the Student Support Group (SSG) meetings for these students, act as their learning mentor and co-ordinate the team around the learner
- all students from aged 15 years and above will be assisted to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future and work experience
- team leaders conduct SSG's every term for all Koorie students and make connection with the Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO)
- team leaders conduct SSG's (including IEP and Educational Needs Analysis (ENA)) every term for all students in Out of Home Care (OOHC) and are their Learning Mentor
- the wellbeing and engagement team ensure students have the opportunity to participate in groups that address mental health, health promotion and social skills development in response to their identified needs (via attendance data, student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff)
- staff apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma

Individual

The following individualised student specific strategies are developed on a case by case basis:

- the team builds constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school through SSG's (refer to <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/SSG> & GSC SSG Handbook)
- Individual Education Plan and Behaviour Support Plan (refer to GSC SSG Handbook)
- Program for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PSD>)
- referral to wellbeing and engagement school-based support via a Team Around the Learner (TAL) form (refer to GSC Compass)
- discussion and action plan at weekly team meetings (refer to GSC Attendance processes)
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made (for example: change classroom set up, instruction, furniture, lighting, modify dates/work/tasks/assessments)
- referral to Student Support Services, ChildFirst, Headspace (RISE, ENHANCE), Navigator, Lookout
- referral to GSC Doctors in Schools (refer to GSC Dr Referral Form) or external medical services
- referral to external counselling (refer to GSC Local Counselling Service List)
- referral to GSC Careers Team for pathway and program planning
- report to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Police as needed

Recording attendance

Gleneagles SC must record attendance in every class. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Gleneagles SC's duty of care for all students
- meet Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority requirements for VCE students

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher at the start of each lesson/period using Compass

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify Gleneagles SC of absences by:

- **Phoning the college absence line on 9708-1320**

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Gleneagles SC will notify parents by SMS/push notification. Gleneagles SC will attempt to contact parents as soon as practicable on the same day of the unexplained absence, allowing time for the parent to respond.

If contact cannot be made with the parent (due to incorrect contact details), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school, where possible, on the day of the unexplained absence.

Gleneagles SC will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The Principal will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Gleneagles SC considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexcused absence**'.

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes and support the student's return to school
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance

If no explanation is provided by the parent within 10 school days of an absence, it will be recorded as an 'unexplained absence' and recorded on the student's file.

Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused.

Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, Gleneagles SC will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing an Attendance Student Support Group
- implementing a Return to School Plan

- implementing an Individual Education Plan
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from relevant Wellbeing supports

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, will endeavour to provide this support when it is required,

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Gleneagles SC decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student’s unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the DET – Southern Region Office for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to contact with a parent, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school, the Principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
 - the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
 - measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student’s whereabouts are unknown and:
 - the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school’s website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- The Department’s Policy and Advisory Library (PAL): [Attendance](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2024
Consultation	School Council Principal Team Leadership Team
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2025